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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 30 November 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. FLEMMING (Vice-President)	(Saint Lucia)
later:	Mr. de MARCO (President)	(Malta)
later:	Mr. FORTIER (Vice-President)	(Canada)

- Question of Palestine [23] (continued)

  (a) Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

  (b) Report of the Secretary-General

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In the absence of the President, Mr. Flemming (Saint Lucia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 23 (continued)

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

(a) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE EXERCISE OF THE INALIENABLE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE (A/45/35)

(b) REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/45/709)

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken yesterday afternoon, the list of speakers in the debate will be closed today at 12 noon. I therefore request those representatives wishing to participate in the debate to inscribe their names as soon as possible.

Mr. NOOR (Afghanistan): The General Assembly has before it once again the question of Palestine. This item has been under consideration for a very long time. In fact, the United Nations has been seized of the question almost since the inception of the Organization itself; and yet, through all these years and decades, the question has remained unresolved and, as a result, the Middle East has continued to be a hotbed of tension and a serious threat to international peace and security. This is largely because of the intransigence of Israel, marked by its persistent denial of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, particularly their right to have their own independent State and their ancestral land. The suffering caused to all the peoples of the region as a result of the aggressive expansionist and hegemonistic manifestations of Zionism has been very harsh indeed. Several times the region has been engulfed in armed conflict resulting in great human and material destruction, while the no-war, no-peace periods in between have seriously undermined the economic development of the entire region. No people, however, has suffered so much as a result of the perpetual tragedy that has

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been the lot of the entire Palestinian nation for decades and generations. Many of the people have left. Many of them indeed have been banished from their land with no place to call home except perhaps a refugee camp and with no hope for the future except the legitimacy and predestined victory of their heroic struggle. Others have fallen victim to the brutal Israeli occupation, which has been totally blind to international law and generally accepted humanitarian considerations. They have been forcefully deported. Their houses have been demolished and their lands have been confiscated for the sake of the establishment of illegal Jewish settlements.

The list of atrocities could go on and on. They include every form of oppression and repression ever known and when the Palestinians have protested they have met with bullets - real ones - that have been fired even on small schoolchildren.

What is significant is the fact that, despite all this, the Palestinian nation has heroically refused to wither away or to give up its struggle to regain what has been taken from it by use of force but none the less still belongs to it. Over the past three years, the heroic intifadah has demonstrated, against all odds that the Palestinian people - young and old, men, women and children - are ready to struggle to regain their legitimate rights to statehood, independence and freedom, no matter what it takes and how long it takes. Their struggle is morally right, legally justified and historically destined to be victorious.

However, the international community and this lofty body representing it, as well as the Security Council, have every obligation to adopt all the necessary measures to undo the wrongs committed against the Palestinian people and, by doing so, resolve the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

The outline of a just, peaceful and lasting solution to the question of Palestine and the Middle East has been clear for quite some time. Moreover, this outline has enjoyed the unanimous support of the international community.

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An international conference - with the participation, on an equal footing, of all the parties concerned, including of course the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people - which should seek a comprehensive solution based on the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people to statehood - remains the only practical means of achieving a peaceful solution to the question. The Assembly should request the Security Council to take immediate steps towards the convening of such a conference and the implementation of its resolutions on the situation in the Middle East. While commending the constructive position of the PLO and the State of Palestine, particularly the historic initiative of its National Council in 1988, we condemn Israeli intransigence in blocking the convening of such a conference.

The recent statement by the Prime Minister of Israel demonstrated that the expansionist idea of "Greater Israel" is still with the Zionist leadership. However, the total withdrawal of Israel from all the occupied Palestinian and other Arab lands, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, as well as the full restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including statehood in their own land, remain the prerequisites for any peaceful and just solution of the Middle East situation. Without an end being put to Israeli expansionist designs, peace in the region is simply inconceivable.

Pending the full restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, we believe that the Assembly and the Security Council should take urgent measures to protect the lives and the rights of the Palestinian people living in occupied territories. While condemning Israeli defiance of the recent Security Council resolution on the investigation of Israeli brutalities against innocent and unarmed Palestinians, we call upon the Security Council to adopt urgent measures to ensure compliance with its resolution and to establish, as a matter of urgency, an

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effective United Nations presence in the occupied territories with a legal mandate to protect the Palestinians.

Israel, as the occupying Power, must be made to abide by the Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949, which is certainly applicable to the situation in the occupied territories.

Mr. ARIDOR (Israel): I would like to congratulate Mr. de Marco on his election to the Presidency of the General Assembly. We know of his leadership qualities and are confident, therefore, of his continued success in steering the work of the General Assembly at the current session.

If one leaves this Hall and goes to the left, following the corridor down to the elevators, one will find around the corner to the right a replica of the Codes of Hammurabi, King of Babylon from 1792 to 1750 B.C. Next to this replica is an inscription in which the modern meaning of the Codes is spelt out. Here is what it says:

"To cause justice to prevail in the country
To destroy the wicked and the evil
That the strong may not oppress the weak"

This, I must add, is the gift presented to the United Nations in 1977 by the Government of Iraq. Indeed, they have a strange sense of humour.

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That the Iraqi régime makes a mockery of the ethos immortalized by Hammurabi nearly 4,000 years ago is not surprising. But there are some Arab representatives who would do well to take a long, hard look at the Iraqi gift and read the inscription. If they do not listen to what I have to say here, at least they should begin to learn what is written there.

Truth has strange characteristics; it will cry out even from the wall outside, but it has some difficulty entering this Hall. The truth about the Jews and Israel is that never in the annals of human history has there been a more immutable link between a land and a people. Thirty-five centuries of Jewish attachment to the land of Israel stand as permanent testimony to this bond. And, although driven from our homeland for more than 18 centuries, we never ceased to pray for our return. Buffeted by the forces of history, the land of Israel passed from hand to hand through 13 conquests down the ages. But the Jewish people maintained a tenacious link with the land, and continuous Jewish residence in Israel never ceased at any time in history.

Hounded and oppressed over the centuries, we moved from country to country carrying Israel with us across the continents. Such is the saga of Zionism. Wherever we were dispersed to, Israel went with us in our dreams, and with this dream we returned to our homeland. Throughout two millennia of exile, our tears, our prayers, our aspirations, were cemented into a pillar that withstood the ravages of history, a pillar on which now stands the Jewish State, at the same place, with the same capital inaugurated nearly 3,000 years ago by our King David.

The historic right of the people of Israel to the land of Israel needs no confirmation. Nevertheless, this right has been confirmed by the international community in the Balfour Declaration, the Mandate of the League of Nations and the United Nations General Assembly. With the termination of the British Mandate on 14 May 1948, the State of Israel was re-established. In its declaration of

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independence, proclaimed on that same day, Israel pleaded for peace with its neighbours in the following words:

"We extend our hand to all neighbouring States and their peoples in an offer of peace and good-neighbourliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of co-operation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East."

This call - in the very first hour of the existence of Israel - still holds, still stands.

But Israel's call for peace was drowned by the armed aggression of seven Arab States Members of the United Nations which aimed at annihilating the newly established Jewish State. The nature of this war was immediately defined by the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Azzam Pasha. Speaking on 15 May, the day of the invasion, he declared:

"This will be a war of extermination and a momentous massacre which will be spoken of like the Mongolian massacres and the Crusades."

This "war of extermination" has continued for more than 42 years by the will of the Arab States, with the sole exception of Egypt, which set the courageous precedent that peace can and will be achieved. Other Arab States have not followed suit. Israel remains the only country in the world forced by its neighbours to exist for decades under the shadow of an incessant, relentless state of war. This is the bare element, this is the very core of the Arab-Israeli conflict: the refusal of the Arab world to come to terms with the right of the Jewish people to renew their independence on a small sliver of land at the periphery of the Middle East.

All other issues are the results which flow from this single, elemental essence. All other issues, including the Palestinian issue, can be resolved only

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when the Arab world reconciles itself to the existence of a Jewish State. This tiny State, even if one includes the administered territories, is 27,000 square kilometres in size. The total land mass of the 20 sovereign nations of the Arab world is 14.5 million square kilometres. We live on less than two tenths of one per cent of this area; 4.5 million people sue for acceptance of their right to exist in the midst of 190 million inhabitants of 20 Arab States. It is far from being an extravagant demand. It is entirely self-evident.

In 1948 the United Nations did nothing to stop the combined onslaught of the seven of its Arab Member States which pounced upon Israel in order to destroy the new Jewish State, only years after 6 million Jews, abandoned and left to die by the world, were murdered during the Nazi Holocaust. Yet, Israel exists. It exists because in 1948 the people of Israel did not allow the Nazi experience to be repeated. They defended the Jewish State single-handed.

Israel was under constant attack in the 1950s. Between 1948 and 1956 terrorist inroads across all Israel's boundaries - the pre-1967 boundaries - were a daily occurrence, and were directed mainly at civilian targets. In that seven-year period the Arab States carried out 11,873 acts of sabotage and murder.

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Israel suffered 1,335 casualties, over 1,000 among civilians. We had to defend ourselves again in 1967, when a noose was finally drawn around Israel's neck. On the eve of the six-day war, the United Nations Emergency Force collapsed under Arab pressure at the very moment of emergency, allowing 100,000 enemy troops swiftly to replace it on Israel's vulnerable boundaries. Israel exists because once again, outmanned, outgunned, and outnumbered, we repulsed a concerted three-pronged attack single-handedly.

We were attacked again in 1973 when the Arab States launched a surprise war on Yom Kippur. As usual when it concerns Israel, the United Nations failed to act in response to this grave breach of international peace and security. The United Nations remembered to involve itself only two weeks later, when the tide of war had turned in Israel's favour.

The fundamental fact that Israel is constantly under the threat of mortal danger has been totally obscured at the United Nations. Instead, it is we who face a barrage of hostile resolutions in this Assembly. But those who did nothing to assist us in times of peril, who abandoned the Jewish State in situations of life and death time and time again, who do nothing to help Israel in any way today have no moral claim on us; they have no right to issue demands or dictate appeasement.

No decision, resolution or statement in this Hall will obscure the reality of the unprecedented array of forces with which the Arab States confront Israel today: 3 million men under arms, 11,800 tanks, 1,656 combat aircraft and 8,600 artillery guns - shared by Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, divided among themselves today, but united at any time, in the past or in the future, against Israel. According to foreign sources, Israel is outnumbered by ratios of 5 to 1 in armed forces, 3 to 1 in tanks, and 5 to 2 in combat aircraft.

Armed attacks against Israel have failed. But the Arab Group and its

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supporters at the United Nations wage a continuation of war by other means here, standing Clausewitz on his head.

Outside this Hall, the PLO, its components and affiliates still call for the killing of Jews. They still gloat when Jews are killed. They still hail the murderers of Jews as national heroes. And outside this Hall they call on Saddam Hussein to use his deadly missiles against Israel's population. The leader of one of these affiliates, the Islamic Jihad Sheikh Assad Bayud Tamimi, had these chilling words to offer us only three days ago:

> "We can expect more battles and more victims and more dead and more attacks against Jews. It is the fate of the Jews to be slaughtered by us, for: 'God has sworn to oppress them until the day of judgement, when they will be inflicted with painful torture.' Now, after America and Europe have tortured [the Jews], we have taken it upon ourselves to torture them, for the fate of the Jews is to suffer."

If there is one missing link in the chain of Nazi continuity, it is not in the goals but in the capabilities. Israel does not intend to provide this missing link by relinquishing its defences.

If we have learned anything from the Iraqi blitzkrieg on 2 August, it is the importance of strategic depth. Tiny Kuwait was devoured overnight. The distance from the Iraq-Kuwait border to Kuwait City - the width of Kuwait - is approximately 80 miles. That distance, crossed in less than six hours by the Iraqi troops, is twice the width of Israel today with the administered territories, and nine times the width of the narrow west line of Israel prior to the six-day war. So much for the slogans "tiny Kuwait" and "greater Israel". If one were to hail a taxicab at Wall Street and go uptown to Columbia University, one would cross the equivalent of the width of Israel prior to the six-day war. This would represent the nine-mile

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waistline we had to live with. There are many representatives here who cross that distance on the Franklin D. Roosevelt Drive on a daily basis. Tanks traverse that distance in less than half an hour. Missiles cover it in seconds.

Allowing for a PLO-ruled State in the heart of Israel is tantamount to allowing Saddam Hussein's missiles on the other side of Pennsylvania Avenue. This will never be. Saddam Hussein and Yasser Arafat have made their intentions crystal clear. Israel, like any other sovereign State, is not in the business of collective suicide.

When such forces as those I have mentioned confront us, the importance of strategic depth can be discarded with scorn only by those who are indifferent, if not hostile, to Israel's vital security needs.

Anti-Israel political warfare as exhibited here will never be a substitute for peaceful negotiations. Enemies of peace at the United Nations can harass Israel; they cannot break Israel. They can vote against Israel; they cannot vote Israel out of the Middle East. They can try to distort the facts of history and the inseparable link between the Jewish people and their land; they cannot rewrite the Bible, unless there are plans to issue a new and revised edition of the Bible, to be circulated as a United Nations document. When it comes to the treatment Israel receives at the United Nations, imagination has no limits.

The Arab Group tries its worst, corrupting itself and every forum and procedure of this Organization in the process. Member States of that Group single out Israel for separate treatment at every opportunity: the credentials procedure, Security Council resolutions, special inquiries, special committees, and discriminatory treatment of Zionism - the national liberation movement of the Jewish people.

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Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East, gets special, separate and unequal treatment from this Assembly on a consistent basis. The formal pretext is the protection of civilians. This practice smacks of the demands, in the name of human rights, for the protection of the Sudeten Germans in the late 1930s. These demands were made against their alleged oppression by democratic Czechoslovakia under the presidency of Mr. Eduard Benes. This was the prelude to appeasement, the prelude to the extinction of Czechoslovakia as an independent State.

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But what is the real meaning of separate treatment? The United States Supreme Court determined in Brown v. Board of Education, a landmark case of equal treatment under the law, that separation is inherently unequal. The year was 1954. At issue was the protection of Black Americans from underhand discrimination, known as the doctrine of "separate but equal". But the proponents of such exclusionary practices here are safely out of the reach of the constitutional principles of the United States. The practice of singling out one country - always one country, always the Jewish State - is not merely undermining the inviolable principles of universality and sovereign equality. Separate but unequal, translated into Afrikaans, is one ugly word: apartheid. This political apartheid, like any other form of apartheid, is to be condemned. I call upon all civilized nations to dissociate themselves from this discriminatory practice. Peace and security have never been and never will be achieved through discrimination; nor will they be by continued persecution of the Jewish State.

There is no over-abundance of peace options in the Middle East. The road to the peace reached by Egypt and Israel led through direct negotiations. That road has proved to be the only road to peace. We have proposed direct negotiations. We have proposed elections for the Palestinian Arabs in the administered territories. Those who spend all their time and energy devising detours to avoid this riad are really search for a detour to avoid peace.

Yet they lag behind the rapid pace of history. The world marches on change. Co-operation is eclipsing confrontation. The rumblings of democratization are giving unprecedented momentum to the process, which is leaping across political and cultural boundaries. President Gorbachev unbolted the gates of bipolar stalemate and sent the political environment on a trek to a better world. I may add that, after many thousands of years, the unthinkable has occurred. Even the

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French La Manche, or English Channel, is being connected by the Eurotunnel. It serves to prove that in human history everything is possible - even peace in the Middle East. All that is needed is vision.

One day Israel will celebrate the dawning of peace with all its neighbours. Peace will appear on the horizon the minute Arab leaders realize that they cannot settle differences or change reality by force, and that no one else will do it for them. This they will realize only when they lose all hope that Israel will disappear. And the less encouragement they receive in this Hall, the more promising will be the prospect of peace.

One day we will celebrate the dawning of peace with all our neighbours. Where the vision of the prophets was first enunciated, there also peace will reign. This is the vision with which the people of Israel have lived since Biblical times, as articulated in the prophesy of Isaiah:

"Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (The Holy Bible, Isaiah 2:4)

One day we will celebrate the dawning of peace with all our neighbours. That will indeed be a day.*

Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia): Despite the positive transformation of the global political landscape that is reflected in a new spirit of mutual accommodation and co-operation in international relations, the unresolved question of Palestine continues to escalate to incalculable heights of violence, death for its people and destruction of property. For the past 43 years the Palestinians have been persistently denied the fundamental rights of nations and peoples as

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* The President took the Chair.

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envisaged in the Charter, making the situation in the Middle East increasingly volatile and grave with each passing day. The fact that for so long no peaceful solution could be found or was allowed to be achieved for this continuing human tragedy only accentuates the historic injustice.

The core of the conflict is unquestionably the adamant refusal of Israel to abandon its illegal occupation of Arab and Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and its denial of the legitimate and inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination. Such a policy not only undermines and threatens peace and security in the occupied territories, but is already beginning to have far-reaching consequences elsewhere in the region and beyond.

It is clear that there can hardly be any hope for peace and stability in the region if Israel persists in its untenable policy of settling Soviet Jews in the West Bank and Gaza, in the most blatant violation of universally accepted norms of international law and United Nations resolutions forbidding Israel to change the demographic composition of the occupied territories through the establishment of settlements. Such actions cannot but constitute a source of mounting frustration with regard to the exercise of the legitimate right to self-determination of the Palestinians, and thereby exacerbate an already tense situation.

Yet, despite the reign of terror and oppression, the valiant intifadah - the sustained popular uprising of the Palestinians - has conclusively demonstrated that they will not be bludgeoned into submission by any force of arms. In this regard, my delegation hails the sacrifice and steadfastness of the courageous Palestinians in squarely confronting colonial domination. Indonesia condemns these policies of repression and reiterates its unswerving support for the noble and just cause of the Palestinian struggle, which stems from the ideals enshrined in our own 1945 Constitution. It is the firm conviction of Indonesia that independence is the

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right of every nation and that subjection to colonialism in any form whatsoever must be abolished from the world. This was truly reflected in Indonesia's recognition, on 16 November 1988, of the Palestinian State. We therefore welcome the fact that the international community stands united in recognition of the undeniable reality of the urgent need for progress on the diplomatic front.

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Together with the Arab nation and the rest of the international community, my delegation would like to express its strong indignation and profound sorrow over the outrage perpetrated by Israeli police last month at the Al Haram Shareef, in Jerusalem, which resulted in the killing of innocent civilians and the wounding of countless other innocent victims.

It is self-evident that the unanimous adoption of Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990) reflects the grave concern of the international community, especially regarding the acts of violence committed by Israeli forces, resulting in injury and loss of human life. Israel's continuous flouting of the Council's decisions and its refusal to co-operate with the Secretary-General in his fact-finding mission can only contribute to the further deterioration of an already explosive situation in the occupied territories, especially against the backdrop of the other disturbing events taking place in the Middle East. In this regard, Indonesia shares the widely held belief that once we succeed in resolving the current crisis the conflicts that have plagued the region for over four decades must be addressed.

The time has come for the Security Council, in its new-found unanimity, to compel Israel to comply scrupulously with the Fourth Geneva Convention and abide by resolutions 607 (1988), 608 (1988) and 641 (1989). As the Secretary-General has pointed out in his report:

"Clearly, the numerous appeals ... to the Israeli authorities to abide by ... the Fourth Geneva Convention have been ineffective." (S/21919, para. 24)

My delegation fully concurs with the conclusions in the report, especially the call on Israel to co-operate in ensuring the protection and safety of the civilian population.

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The crucial question before us is not simply how best to secure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people. What is also urgently required, as underlined in the report, is

> "that progress be made, and soon, to ensure an effective negotiating process, acceptable to all, that can ensure the interest of both Israelis and Palestinians, and enable them to live in peace with each other." (ibid., para. 26)

The only peaceful way to address the problem before us is to intensify our collective endeavours and work towards a comprehensive, just and equitable political solution which would recognize the inalienable right of the Palestinians to a sovereign and independent State.

In this respect, negotiations should be directed, first and foremost, towards the convening of an international peace conference with the participation of all the parties directly concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinians. We firmly believe that this is the only path by which to achieve long-lasting peace and the settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

What is now required is to convince Israel, first, through sustained political and diplomatic pressure, of the futility and tragic consequences of its policies in the occupied territories.

Secondly, the protection of the Palestinian civilians in the Palestinian territory must be ensured through such measures as the establishment of a properly mandated United Nations presence in the territory, for example, through the deployment in Jerusalem of observers from the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization.

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Thirdly, a meeting should be convened of the high contracting parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to discuss possible measures to be taken by them under the Convention.

Finally, Indonesia would like to reiterate its full support for the sacred cause of the Palestinians. In this respect we render all possible assistance to them, within our modest means, in their pursuit of national liberation and the attainment of national independence.

Mr. EL-FATTAL (Syrian Arab Republic) (interpretation from Arabic): The General Assembly discusses the agenda item entitled "Question of Palestine", at this session, at a time when major changes have led to a shift by the international community from the cold war era to a new era of détente, dialogue and co-operation. This has brought down the psychological and intellectual barriers which divided East from West in the northern hemisphere. Naturally, we welcome those developments, especially since the countries of the third world did bear a large part of the costs of the cold war and the resultant instability of the international system which impeded their growth and progress.

On the other hand, it is to be regretted that our world continues to suffer an increased widening of the gap between the advanced and the developing countries in many fields. Many parts of the world continue to be under occupation and foreign domination. Racist régimes still exist in the world. It is our hope that the international détente, which benefits the peoples and countries of Europe, will embrace the developing countries as well, through a North-South co-operation that would solve the problems of the peoples deprived of their inalienable rights, so that the fruits of international détente may include the redress of the many injustices, from which the South suffers, in the political, security, economic and social spheres. This requires tremendous efforts so that peace, security and

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stability may become a world-wide phenomenon. It also requires the consolidation of the supremacy of international law in international relations and respect for the commitments enshrined in the Charter and the resolutions of the United Nations.

The problem of the Middle East is a grave one indeed, which threatens international peace and security. Israel continues to consider force and threat of force as the basic premise of its expansionist policy in the Middle East region. The Palestinian people continue to be denied their natural and inalienable right to self-determination and the establishment of their State on their national soil. Israel, which occupies Palestine, the Syrian Arab Golan and parts of southern Lebanon, persists in its aggression, terrorism, expansion, annexation and settlement and threatens to wage more wars against the Arab people in the region. It is possible to say that Israel, which considers itself an extension of the West, was the first beneficiary of the changes we have witnessed on the international arena. It has been able to realize more of its selfish, aggressive and settler interests and to tighten its grip on the occupied territories. Israel now works for the depopulation of those lands of their Arab inhabitants. It has exploited the concept of human rights in order to realize its illegitimate settlement designs through the distortion of the concept of "the right of a person to leave his country" in such a way that the concept has become a pretext used that Israel uses to arrange the organized emigration of Jews to Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan. Towards that end, it uses every means of temptation and intimidation at the expense of the Arabs, who are threatened by annihilation or mass deportation now more than in any other time. While so doing, Israel denies a fundamental human right, namely the right of return to one's homeland.

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There are millions of Arab Palestinians and thousands of Syrian Arabs who have been forcibly evicted and are prevented by Israel from returning to a homeland from which they were evicted by the force of arms. Israel's understanding of international changes is that those changes are an opportunity to obtain more support and more sophisticated weaponry from some of its friends and allies in the West, and more of the financial and strategic support which directly contributes to its drive to change the demographic, geographic, economic, cultural and social parameters in the occupied Arab territories with a view to realizing the dream of "Greater Israel" which extends from the Nile to the Euphrates.

It is truly mind boggling that the Arabs, who are defending their very existence, their homeland and their holy sites are the ones who are accused of terrorism when certain countries and Western circles, which are the source of such accusations, are fully aware that Israel established its State on the foundation of the terroristic policies which were practised by Zionist organizations since the early 1940s. It is those organizations which continue to perpetrate every form of terrorism against the Palestinian people and their intifadah, against the Syrians in the occupied Golan Heights and against the Lebanese in southern Lebanon.

The statements by Israeli officials, which can be compared only with those the nazis used to make and the leaders of South African apartheid continue to make, clearly show that Israel is determined to defy the international community, which is committed to a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the Middle East that would be based on international legitimacy, the provisions of the Charter and the relevant United Nations resolutions.

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The Israeli persistence in the policy of annexation and settlement is reflected in the statements made by Israeli officials, especially those statements which have followed one another since the beginning of 1990. Suffice to mention a few.

On 14 January 1990, Shamir declared that:

"Israel must hold on to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in expectation of a mass immigration of Soviet Jews from the Soviet Union". (Reported by Reuters from Al-Quds)

Reuters commented that Government officials in Israel expected immigration of 300,000 Jews to Israel over the next three years as a result of the new policies of the Soviet Union and the new American restrictions imposed on immigration to the United States of America.

In another newspaper report,

"Shamir said that the greater influx of immigrants imposes on Israel the maintenance of the territories it occupies because it is in dire need of land to house all these numbers." (The Jerusalem Post, 15 January 1990)

In another statement by an Israeli official:

"Ramen Nakhman, the mayor of Ariel, stated that the influx of thousands of Soviet Jews constitutes manpower in the West Bank and Gaza which would allow Israel to secure its continued grip on those lands and to change the situation completely there and call them Yehudah and Samaria".

(The Washington Post, 25 January 1990)

In yet another statement by Shamir on 7 September 1990:

"Shamir said today on Radio Israel that Jerusalem is an integral part of Israel and that construction in the city will continue unabated".

(The Washington Post, 8 October 1990)

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The same report went on to say:

"Shamir said, when he attended the inauguration of the Theological Institute in eastern Jerusalem, which Israel seized from Jordan in the 1967 War, that this new quarter will be built between two basic landmarks in the city: the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus. Indeed, the Hebrew University is on Mount Scopus. Yet the Mount of Olives is adjacent to many Arab quarters". (Ibid.)

In a statement made by Shamir on 19 November 1990 at a meeting of the Likud Party, he said:

(spoke in English)

"The past leaders of the party left us a clear message to keep the land of Israel from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River for future generations and for the mass immigration, and for the Jewish people, most of whom will be gathered in this country". (The Washington Post, 20 November 1990)

The report went on to say:

"The Jerusalem Post quoted him as saying: 'There is no connection whatsoever between our maintaining the territorial integrity of the land of Israel between the sea and the Jordan River - which is a vital security necessity for the State of Israel - and the mass immigration, which is the fulfilment of the greater Zionist dream'." (Ibid.)

(continued in Arabic)

With regard to the occupied Syrian Golan Heights, Shamir said:

"The Golan Heights is not a subject of controversy or bargaining. The Heights constitute an integral part of Israel and (I) do not intend to break this law". ("Al-Hayat" International, 8 August 1990)

These statements are always coupled with terroristic acts committed against the Arabs in occupied Palestine, the occupied Golan Heights and southern Lebanon.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

Lately, Israel perpetrated two major massacres, which have shaken the international conscience: the massacre of Ein-Qaza which was committed on 20 May 1990 by the occupying forces with the participation of immigrant settlers. The victims were seven Arab workers killed, and hundreds of Arabs wounded on the following day in Gaza. The second was the massacre perpetrated in al Haram al-Shareef when 23 Arabs were butchered while defending the sanctity of the Holy Places against attacks by the settlers. The Security Council has denounced this last massacre and decided to dispatch a fact-finding mission, but as usual Israel refused to receive the mission under a pretext that is contrary to the most basic principles of international law. In his report the Secretary-General included Israel's reply:

> "Jerusalem is not, in any part, "occupied territory"; it is the sovereign capital of the State of Israel. Therefore, there is no room for any involvement on the part of the United Nations in any matter related to Jerusalem. ...
>
> "Given the above, Israel will not receive the delegation of the Secretary-General of the United Nations." (S/21919, paras. 3 (3) and 3 (4))

These massacres are but episodes in a series of Israeli acts of the terrorism of which the Zionist movement has become a past-master and which it systematically practised since 1948 in expelling the Arabs. Suffice to recall the eviction of the inhabitants of Haifa, Jaffa and the triangle, in addition to the terroristic acts committed in Qibya, Kafr Kassim and Deir Yassin all in order to create a settlement concentration totally devoid of any Arab presence.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

In fact, the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories has brought out most eloquently Israel's exclusivist nature in its report to the General Assembly of 1979, wherein the Committee described Israel's racist policy in the following words:

> "Israel's policy in the occupied territories is based on the so-called 'homeland' doctrine which envisages a mono-religious (Jewish) State established on territory that includes those territories occupied by Israel in June 1967." (A/34/631, para. 367)

The Special Committee arrived at the following conclusion:

> "to the extent that the inhabitants of the occupied territories do not form part of the religious group in whose name the Government of Israel claims the right to establish itself, these inhabitants have no rights vis-à-vis the governing authorities (in this case the Government of Israel as a military occupation authority) whenever the exercise of these rights happens to run counter to the 'homeland' policy." (ibid., para. 368)

The Committee concluded, too, that such a dogmatic conviction is bound to deprive the Arabs of their right to return to their homeland. The report goes on to say:

> "Therefore, the Government of Israel assisted by the judicial authorities continues to deny the right to return to their homes to those inhabitants of the occupied territories who fled as a result of the hostilities and to those expelled by the Israeli military authorities from the occupied territories since June 1967." (ibid.)

And yet we hear the representative of Israel stating before the Assembly that Israel is the only democratic country in the Middle East.

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

It is indeed a paradox that Israel, which claims that it wants peace, should continue to reject the convening of an international Middle East peace conference, under the auspices of the United Nations, as called for by the General Assembly almost a decade and a half ago. It is indeed a strange paradox that Israel should say that the problem in the region is that there are no peace agreements between it and the Arab countries, while it totally ignores the fact that the real problem is its occupation of the Arab territories. Peace cannot be established without Israel's withdrawal from those territories. Peace and occupation have never co-habited under the same roof in any period of history.

The Arab position vis-à-vis a just, comprehensive and lasting peace has been put forward since 1982. On 9 September 1982, at the Fez Arab Summit Conference, the Arab peace plan was formulated. The plan calls for the withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including Arab Al-Quds, the reaffirmation of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and its right to exercise all its inalienable national rights, including the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds as its capital and reaffirms the Security Council's role in formulating peace guarantees.

Moreover, all ensuing Arab summit conferences have reaffirmed these principles. The last of those summits was the extraordinary meeting held in Casablanca in 1989, which reiterated that a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), together with all relevant United Nations resolutions.

However, Israel continued to reject a just and comprehensive peace, with a view to carrying out its expansionist designs in the Middle East region. Therefore, it is incumbent upon the General Assembly to face up to this defiance and redouble its efforts to uphold international legitimacy as embodied in the

(Mr. El-Fattal, Syrian Arab Republic)

resolutions relating to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The General Assembly must urge the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter and relevant resolutions so as to restore a just and comprehensive peace through the convening of the international Middle East peace conference, which the Assembly completely endorses.

Let me conclude by saying that for us in Syria the cause of the Palestinian people is the main issue. It is the axis of our struggle against aggression and occupation and our striving for a just peace. The Palestinian territory is part and parcel of the Arab homeland, nay, the very heart of the Arab homeland; the Palestinian people are part and parcel of the Arab nation to which we belong. Therefore, the aggression against the Palestinian people is an aggression against the Arab nation. The elimination of that aggression is no longer a demand of the Arabs alone but an international demand, because the world cannot enjoy a stable and comprehensive peace without an end to that aggression.

Mr. TRAXLER (Italy): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the European Community and its member States.

The end of the East-West confrontation which characterized the post-war period has brought this year positive changes in many regions of the world. It is therefore distressing that this positive climate has not yet affected the Middle East. On the contrary, the situation in that region, to which the member States of the European Community are linked by profound historical ties, has deteriorated.

The Twelve follow with the utmost concern the problems of the area arising from old and recent political tensions and spare no effort to contribute, in conformity with the principles set out by the Community in its declarations, to the peaceful solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the question of Palestine, which, alas, threatens international stability.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

The Gulf crisis should not prevent the international community from focusing on the Arab-Israeli conflict in order to start a truly effective political process aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Events in recent years have prompted hopes regarding the possibility of breaking free of the impasse which has prevailed for several years. I refer to the acceptance by the Palestine National Council in 1988 of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and to the Palestine Liberation Organization's renunciation of terrorism, which remains an essential principle. I refer to the Israeli proposal to hold elections in the occupied territories, which could be an important step in the peace process provided elections are a part of a comprehensive settlement process and are held in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, under appropriate guarantees of freedom. Finally, I refer to the direct dialogue which started between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization, as well as to the 10-point proposal by President Mubarak and the five-point peace plan of Secretary of State Baker. All these initiatives were regarded by the Twelve as capable of creating between the two parties a climate of trust which could facilitate an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

The Twelve would have wished to salute on this occasion the realization of further concrete steps forward in the political process directed at finding a negotiated settlement of the Palestine question.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

The reality has dashed our hopes. The peace process is again at a standstill. The Israeli Government has deferred the prospects of an Arab-Israeli dialogue by introducing restrictive conditions. Talks between the United States and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) have been suspended. The persistence of the Palestinian uprising clearly reflects frustration and resentment at the Israeli occupation and at the refusal of the Israeli authorities to offer any credible prospects of dialogue with the Palestinians. Clearly, the situation requires the effective attention of the international community.

The Twelve are determined to encourage all efforts to promote a dialogue between the parties directly concerned leading to the negotiation of a lasting, just and comprehensive settlement of the question of Palestine.

In this regard, the Twelve strongly appeal to Israel to open a political dialogue with the Palestinian people by adopting an innovative and constructive attitude towards the Palestinian question.

The Twelve wish to stress their intention to work for a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian problem in conformity with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and with the principles set out by the Community in its own previous declarations - namely: the right of all the States in the region, including Israel, to exist within safe, recognized and guaranteed boundaries, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); the right to justice of all the peoples in the region, which includes recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, with all that this implies.

The Twelve believe that a peaceful settlement based on these principles should be achieved through the convening, at an appropriate time, of the International Peace Conference under the auspices of the United Nations. In their view, this

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

Conference would be an appropriate forum for the negotiations between the parties concerned. The Twelve reiterate that the PLO should be a part of this process.

The Twelve support all the efforts, and primarily the efforts of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General, aimed at breaking the vicious circle of hatred and confrontation prevailing in the occupied territories by establishing a constructive climate of mutual respect and trust. In this regard, the Twelve deeply appreciated the initiative of the Secretary-General in sending a mission to Israel and the occupied territories in June in order to assess the current situation and study the options for improving the conditions of the Palestinians.

All parties have a responsibility to refrain from actions or statements that might impede steps towards dialogue and negotiations. Those who would choose violence over peaceful means for achieving political objectives cannot be allowed to prevail. Neither the taking of human life, whatever the circumstances, nor violence against civilians can play any part in achieving peace and reconciliation. The Twelve express their deep dismay at the bloody incidents on 8 October 1990 in Jerusalem which resulted in the killing and wounding of a large number of civilians. On that occasion the Twelve considered unacceptable and once again strongly deplored the use of excessive force by Israeli occupying forces in repressing Palestinian demonstrations, against a background of repeated violation of international law. In this regard, the Twelve support Security Council resolutions 672 (1990) and 673 (1990).

They welcome the report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council. In this context, they express their concern for the refusal of the Israeli Government to receive the Secretary-General's mission in accordance with the provisions of resolution 672 (1990), and they share the Secretary-General's opinion that practical steps should be taken to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian civilians living under Israeli occupation.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

In accordance with their firm commitment to uphold international law, the Twelve reaffirm the principle of the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force. This principle, embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and recalled in Security Council resolution 242 (1967), is binding on all States. This implies that Israel must put an end to the territorial occupation it has maintained since the conflict of 1967.

This year we have witnessed a deterioration of the situation in the occupied territories caused by the increased number of illegal settlements. The Twelve stress that any change in the demographic structure of the occupied territories is illegal under international law and constitutes an obstacle to the peace process. The settlement policy in the territories, including East Jerusalem, occupied by Israel since 1967 is making territorial compromises ever more difficult and erects a growing obstacle to peace in that region. Indeed, establishing new settlements or enlarging existing ones is the reverse of the kind of confidence-building measures that would contribute to a peaceful solution. The Twelve recognize - indeed support - the right of Jews who wish to do so to emigrate. The Twelve are, however, firmly of the view that this right must not be implemented at the expense of the right of the Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Furthermore, the Twelve consider as null and void the unilateral decision taken by Israel to modify the status of Jerusalem. They reaffirm the particular importance of Jerusalem, the Holy City of three religions, and state that everyone's freedom of access to places of worship must be safeguarded.

Finally, the Twelve reiterate that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War must be implemented in the occupied territories. Israel's persistent refusal to acknowledge that this Convention is fully applicable can in no way be

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

justified and is a matter of great concern to the Twelve. The Security Council has confirmed in many resolutions that the Fourth Geneva Convention does indeed apply to the Israeli occupied territories, most recently in its resolutions 636 (1989), 641 (1989), 672 (1990) and 673 (1990), which the Twelve unreservedly support.

The Twelve States members of the European Community are aware of the extreme gravity and complexity of the Palestinian problem. A further injustice to the Arab people is the fact that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait - from which, as from any aggression, all should unequivocally dissociate themselves - has delayed the search for progress towards a solution to the problem of Palestine. The Twelve are ready to contribute by means of an intense dialogue with all the parties concerned to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting solution.

Mr. INDER JIT (India): The question of Palestine is as old as the United Nations itself. All attempts to find a solution, every initiative, every agreement and every major development in the region have, paradoxically, seemed to render the problem only more intractable.

(Mr. Inder Jit, India)

The inherent complexities of the situation arising from its historical evolution and mutual distrust compounded by recurrent hostilities are understandable. But these provide no alibi for the persistent failure of the international community to find a just, comprehensive and lasting solution. The urgency of finding a solution has become even more imperative in the light of the recognition of the gravity of the problem as underscored by the Secretary-General. He has stated:

> "The Middle East as a whole continues to be the most explosive region of the world today." (A/45/1, p. 10)

He has also stated that a prolonged delay in the settlement of the Middle East problem poses a grave threat to peace and security in the region as well as the world.

The question of Palestine remains at its core, and demands immediate attention. Since the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly last year, the world has come a long way. Momentous changes have taken place. There is promise of a new world-wide framework devoid of confrontation in an age of ever-growing interdependence among nations. However, a world order of peace and security will remain only a cherished objective until the threats of conflict and instability emanating from the Middle East are wholly rooted out. A just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine is therefore a prerequisite of the ushering in of an era of peace, enduring stability and progress throughout the world. This, we submit, has to come soon if it is to have any meaning. The emerging post-cold-war world demands that such festering issues as the question of Palestine be tended and healed. Failure to act now and thereby prolong Palestine's great agony will invoke the condemnation of history.

(Mr. Inder Jit, India)

The widespread agreement in the United Nations on the ways and means of moving towards a peaceful settlement and the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestine people is beyond doubt. The General Assembly again endorsed at its session last year - with the overwhelming support of 151 States represented here - a proposal to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East, under the auspices of the United Nations, with the participation of all parties to the conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, on an equal footing, and the five permanent members of the Security Council. The settlement, if it is to be just, comprehensive and lasting, must take fully into account the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to their homeland, as well as the recognition of the rights of all States in the region, including Palestine and Israel, to live in peace within internationally recognized and secure boundaries. The principles and framework of the settlement are provided by Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

My delegation is firmly of the view that the Israeli authorities must abandon their ill-conceived dream of a "Greater Israel". They must withdraw from all the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories. They must also forsake the path of confrontation, which only breeds a spiral of violence, and must come to terms with the legitimacy of Palestine and the incontrovertible need to reaffirm it.

My delegation urges all countries to move with dispatch, vigour and a sense of purpose towards bringing to an end the extended ordeal of Palestine. The thaw in international relations in recent months has reinvigorated our Organization. It has moved, under the able guidance of our Secretary-General, with purpose and renewed determination towards resolving the many crises and conflicts in various

(Mr. Inder Jit, India)

parts of the world. Its principal organ entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, namely, the Security Council, has eloquently demonstrated that, infused with this new spirit, it is capable of discharging its onerous responsibilities promptly and effectively. It is time to affirm, clearly and unmistakably, that peace is indivisible and that none must be allowed to enjoy the fruits of aggression. Furthermore, all people under foreign occupation must have their legitimate national rights restored.

The question of Palestine is not merely a question of the inalienable political rights of a people. It is also a question of their civil and human rights on the human plane. A majority of the Palestinian people have been wantonly reduced to refugee status in the last several decades, while Israeli authorities continue to settle Jewish immigrants in the occupied territories in brazen defiance of world opinion.

Those Palestinians who have managed to stay close to their homes and homeland have perhaps suffered even more. Deportations, imprisonments, confiscation of property, ransacking of homes and even killings terrorize and debilitate them. The unprovoked and unjustifiable firing - on 8 October in Jerusalem - by Israeli forces on unarmed worshippers assembled at one of their holiest shrines was one more deplorable demonstration of their plight under Israeli occupation. Israel cannot be permitted to deny its full and de jure recognition of its responsibilities as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention. Its attempts to rationalize its denial by pointing its finger elsewhere are only diversionary. The international community's demand that Israel acknowledge its responsibility in this respect cannot be ignored indefinitely.

My delegation believes that the international community and the United Nations also have a special responsibility to ensure the protection of the Palestinian

(Mr. Inder Jit, India)

people in the occupied territories. The Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs in the Occupied Territories has graphically described their suffering in its report (A/45/84). The need for the United Nations and its responsible organs to secure the co-operation of the occupying Power in taking measures aimed at checking and preventing such violations of human rights is both obvious and urgent.

India's support for the cause of the Palestinian people has been steadfast and its commitment unwavering. This was reaffirmed once again in the message of our Prime Minister, Shri Chandra Shekhar, conveyed only the other day, on 29 November, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

My delegation can do no better than to conclude its statement by sharing with this Assembly what our Honourable Prime Minister said in his message. He stated:

> "We urge the international community and particularly the United Nations to take urgent and concerted steps to break the present deadlock in the peace process so that the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians can be realized. India will lend its full support to all efforts for an early, equitable and peaceful resolution of the long-standing Palestinian problem."

Mr. MOUSSA (Egypt): In a fast changing world, there are still some troubling constants, foremost among them the Palestinian problem, which has not been blessed by the winds of change that have swept the globe. This is a sad statement and a negative fact. It should not, however, cause us to become overwhelmed by frustration and despair; rather it should motivate us to persevere in our efforts to achieve a just solution of that problem.

Such a solution should be based on the following basic elements:

First, the withdrawal of Israel and its forces from the territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, in accordance with Security Council resolution 242 (1967);

Secondly, the attainment by the Palestinian people of their right to self-determination without external interference in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

Thirdly, mutual recognition by Israelis and Palestinians of each other's existence, rights and obligations in accordance with the principles and purposes of international law and legitimacy;

Fourthly, guarantees for the security of all States in the area, including Israel; and

Fifthly, normalization of relations in the Middle East.

All those elements can be achieved through a process of negotiations between the parties concerned, in particular the Palestinians and the Israelis, within the framework of an international peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Direct negotiations would also be possible, were it not for the intransigence of the Government of Israel. Accordingly, we should now endeavour to reactivate the role of the United Nations in this process. It has become involved in all other conflicts, and we see no reason for the Arab-Israeli conflict to be the exception to the rule.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

The basis for such a process of peace should be resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) of the Security Council, as well as the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

If the Israeli Government or any other Government, group or individual believes that time will solve the problem in favour of the status quo, they are mistaken.

The intifadah was and is a glaring indication, and a historic event, reminding us all that the Palestinian people shall never acquiesce to foreign occupation, nor succumb to the imposed status quo. The world has already shown respect, understanding and sympathy for the intifadah, its logic and just cause. But has all this driven the message home to the Government of Israel? Unfortunately not.

Despite what I mentioned earlier concerning the rapid change that the world is undergoing, and though the Middle East is unable to catch up with those global developments, I should say that the Palestinian people have indeed tried to move with the spirit of the times, and accordingly took historic decisions in November 1988 to recognize resolution 242 (1967) and accept negotiation with Israel - only to be shunned by the Government of Israel in favour of maintaining an unlawful status quo. In other words, while the Palestinians have shown a constructive approach in line with the new spirit, the Israeli Government has chosen to cling to past practices and old policies.

Even a modest step to pave the way for a peaceful settlement was rejected by the Israeli Government. Negotiations on a proposal for elections in the occupied territories became anathema to the Israeli side, lest it lead to a meaningful peace process that would lead to a just peace.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

If we were to take the statements of the Israeli high officials, including Prime Minister Shamir, at face value, it would appear that a decisive decision in favour of territorial expansion and land acquisition has been, or is about to be, taken. Should we conclude from such statements by high Israeli officials that Israel has finally decided against any peaceful settlement? Should we conclude from such statements that Israel has taken a strategic decision against Security Council resolution 242 (1967)? If this is the case, I feel obliged to state categorically that the Government of Egypt will not be in a position to accept such logic and will stand firm against such Israeli policies of no peace process, of no peaceful settlement and of no peace.

This is the irony of the present dilemma in the Middle East: flexibility on the Palestinian side, while world-wide intensive efforts for the speedy, imaginative and just resolution of the Palestinian problem are being countered and handicapped by Israeli inflexibility.

After years of a somewhat restricted Arab and Palestinian approach to the requirements and prerequisites of a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian problem, we now find the tables turned, with the Israeli Government adamantly projecting a negative position towards any and all efforts at reconciliation. On the other hand, I am compelled to add that the current Israeli policies of settlement, collective punishment, detention and use of force in the occupied territories only feed the vicious spiral of hatred and can hardly be tolerated by an international community aspiring to shed all forms of injustice and placing human rights on the highest pedestal of our collective achievements.

Furthermore, their consequences negate any efforts to generate the requisite confidence between Arabs and Israelis, and leave no hope in the occupied territories that the basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of the

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

Palestinians shall be protected. It is therefore imperative, just and fair to work for the protection of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and to establish an international mechanism to monitor and report back on the situation in those territories and to guarantee that the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, of 1949, are respected and applied.

In his statement this morning the representative of Israel unfortunately used a lop-sided logic when referring to a number of points, as follows.

First, he spoke of the historic right of the people of Israel to the land of Israel without giving any importance or even making one slight reference to the rights of the Palestinian people in the land of Palestine: an issue that was dealt with by both resolutions - 181 (III) of the General Assembly and 242 (1967) of the Security Council. The complete denial of Palestinian national rights is symptomatic of that negative, inflexible posture which can only hamper any peaceful resolution.

Secondly, he said that Israel was attacked in 1973. Again, unfortunately, this was an incorrect statement. The Israeli armies of occupation in Egyptian and Syrian territories were attacked, not Israel.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

In doing so, Egypt and Syria were using their inherent right of self-defence against foreign occupation forces. That is a point of fact, and I wish to put it on record.

My third point concerns the role of the United Nations. The Israeli statement continued to attack the United Nations, despite the fact that both resolution 181 (II) and resolution 242 (1967), among other resolutions, were based on a logic that gave Israel its legitimacy to exist and the chance to join the United Nations and to achieve security and recognition. Such an attitude towards the United Nations comes at a time when the world community is perceiving, with hope, the consolidation of the role of the United Nations on global and regional issues and the general consensus on the pivotal role of the United Nations in forging a new era permeated by peace and co-operation.

My fourth point concerns the question of credentials. I would mention categorically that Egypt does not oppose or reject the credentials of the delegation of Israel. However, we are of the definite opinion that that delegation does not have any credential to represent the territories occupied since June 1967, including Jerusalem.*

Fifthly, the Permanent Representative of Israel mentioned that Israel had proposed direct negotiations and had also proposed elections for the Palestinians in the occupied territories. Alas, that was another partial truth. Perhaps they did propose what he said, but when we called on them to come to the negotiating table according to the Baker formula, they backed down, they refused.

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* Mr. Fortier (Canada), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Moussa, Egypt)

Finally, the representative of Israel accused others of searching for a detour to avoid peace. In my opinion, this is the ultimate irony. Everyone knows exactly which party to the Middle East problem is seeking such a detour, adamantly refusing to face facts, to live up to the new spirit and new developments and to shoulder its responsibilities for peace. Detours aside, I hope that Israel can join in the near future a sincere world effort to achieve a comprehensive and just resolution of that conflict which would be for all a leap forward and not a detour backwards.

Mr. SILOVIC (Yugoslavia): This year we are considering the question of Palestine in a different international climate. The old system based on the balance of power and the struggle for supremacy is disintegrating and a new one is being created. However, some problems rooted in the cold war continue to exist and aggravate present-day international relations and imperil their current positive transformation.

One of the most conspicuous legacies bequeathed by the burdensome past is the Middle East crisis, at the core of which is the question of Palestine. This long-lasting, painful and probably most complicated remnant from a different world continues to resist change. Peace initiatives have died down and there is no sign of a just and comprehensive solution. This parlous state of affairs will not be reversed as long as its root causes are ignored and left unattended.

Recent Israeli actions have led to the increased suffering and killing of the Palestinians in the occupied territories and to the worsening of their living conditions. Repressive measures have also escalated: the property of Palestinians continues to be confiscated; Palestinians are being forcibly evicted and alien settlements are being erected on their ancestral land; and their holy places are desecrated. A glaring example of such reprehensible policy and practices was the recent Temple Mount massacre in Jerusalem.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

The outbreak of the crisis in the Persian Gulf has added further tension and brought about greater instability to a region already plagued by many troubles. Despite these dangerous developments, which have rightfully been the focus of the preoccupation of the entire international community and the United Nations, international attention must not be diverted from the Middle East crisis and the plight of the Palestinians. In that context, the Foreign Ministers of non-aligned countries at their meeting last October adopted a statement in which, inter alia, they emphasized that a prompt solution of the crisis in the Persian Gulf should contribute to having the international community approach the Arab-Israeli conflict and the problem of Palestine with equal determination and urgency.

This difficult situation, fraught with serious threats to international peace and security, makes it incumbent on the international community, the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to rededicate themselves to the re-activation of the peace process and to bring about an eventual solution of this grave conflict. Yugoslavia maintains that no obstacle, however formidable and seemingly insurmountable, should prevent us from taking common and united action in the quest for peace.

One encouraging sign is the emergence of ever broader common ground in the positions of all international protagonists on the essential principles for solving to solve the question of Palestine. Of particular significance in that regard is the recent joint statement issued by the Foreign Ministers of the five permanent members of the Security Council. They reiterated their determination to support an active negotiating process in the Middle East in which all relevant parties would participate, leading to comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

The constructive approach taken by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), particularly the Palestinian peace initiative, including its readiness for a dialogue with Israel, is a significant contribution in this regard. The readiness of the PLO for dialogue on all relevant issues has manifested the P_O's sincerity and genuine understanding of the requirements of peace in the region. Such an attitude by the PLO has further reinforced its rightful claim to participate in any peace negotiations as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This was broadly acclaimed internationally and positively echoed in those circles in Israel that favour a search for a peaceful and just solution.

Bearing all this in mind, we consider that the Security Council should proceed, as a matter of urgency, to convene the International Peace Conference on the Middle East with the participation by all parties directly concerned, including the PLO, and the five permanent members of the Security Council, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). It should bring about full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, particularly the right to self-determination, and Israel's withdrawal from all the territories occupied since 1967. There is no doubt in my mind that it is therefore necessary for the five permanent members to meet and devise the measures needed to convene the Conference and consider guarantees for security measures for all States in the region, including the States of Palestine and Israel.

(Mr. Silovic, Yugoslavia)

Recent experience in the Security Council indicates that given the necessary political will the members of the Council are able to act in unison and achieve consensus on an important matter of concern to the international community. The recent adoption of two resolutions related to the problem of Palestine are eloquent proof that the Security Council is capable of functioning effectively and unanimously with respect to this long-lasting conflict also. Yugoslavia therefore supports every effort by the permanent and other members of the Security Council to ensure an effective negotiating process, acceptable to all, that can secure the interests of both Palestinians and Israelis and enable them to live in peace with each other.

A new, polycentric system of stability, bound to be based on regional arrangements incorporated in a larger whole, will determine future international relations. Through the coming to fruition of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE); exemplified in the recent Paris meeting and its results, Europe has been setting the pace of late. Yet these trends and the system of security evolving from them should not be confined to Europe alone; rather, they should be extended to encompass other regions as well, particularly the Middle East region, which should not be allowed to fester for ever next door and gnaw at mankind's conscience.

Mr. SALAH (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): There is no problem that has been before the Assembly as long as the Palestinian problem.

For over 40 years, the General Assembly has annually and tirelessly discussed this issue. The Security Council, for its part, has also taken up the question of Palestine in the last few weeks and both bodies have adopted resolutions. If only a few of those resolutions were to be implemented, the result would be an early settlement of the question of Palestine. But, the discussions that are held every

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

year on the question of Palestine are, unfortunately, rather in the nature of a routine, annual recall and remembrance of the problems.

It cannot be claimed that failure to make any progress towards the settlement of this question is because it is not a just cause or because of the lack of the international legitimacy which would provide the means of its settlement. And one cannot say that the mechanism for settling the problem does not exist here within the United Nations. As the international community has been aware for a very long time, the question of Palestine is a just cause. The many resolutions of the United Nations provide the required legitimate means of solving the problem. The United Nations cannot be accused of not having the necessary mechanisms to implement its resolutions. What is needed is not more resolutions, but rather a little goodwill, sincerity, decisiveness and an earnest desire to settle this crucial issue which is of concern to the whole world and, in particular, to the peoples and States of the Middle East region.

Our region has suffered enormously because of this problem which emerged within the Assembly over 40 years ago. Our peoples, primarily the Palestinian Arab people, in the last few years have kept coming back to the United Nations time and again asking for it to put an end to their suffering. But thus far this world Organization has not been able to shoulder its responsibilities in this respect because of obstacles placed in its path by Israel and a certain major Power that supports Israel.

In the past, Israel took advantage of the cold war and, particularly, the dispute between the two major super-Powers, to draw the sympathy of one of the two giants and get its full support. In this way, it has been able to pursue its policy of settlement everywhere in the region at the expense of the Palestinian people and their land and that of neighbouring Arab States.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

We, in Jordan, stand side by side with the Palestinian people. This support is based on principle as well as on a community of national Arab interests. For the Palestinian people are an Arab people, a brother Arab people, and we share their suffering and their dreams. Their interests are our interests also and that is why it is impossible for a people or State, if it believes in justice and peace, not to sympathize with the Palestinian people who have suffered so much and who have been subjected to such injustice. Their land has been usurped, their rights have been denied, their fundamental human rights have been flouted and they have been subjected to military occupation of a most despicable nature that has used all the means of repression available to it and all kinds of intimidation in pursuit of aggressive purposes.

Israeli practices in the occupied Palestinian land should indeed irk the international conscience. The inhuman nature of those practices has reached such levels over the past three years that the international community, as represented here and also outside of this Organization, cannot simply sit on its hands.

We have asked the United Nations, and particularly the Security Council, time and time again for international protection for the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories. But every time the Council has been rendered powerless to shoulder its responsibilities because of the position taken by one of the permanent members of the Council. One example of the powerlessness of the Security Council was noted last month when Israel perpetrated a most despicable massacre against people praying in the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the Arab city of Al-Quds when forces opened fire on people praying killing 20 of them and wounding over 150. The Secretary-General, in his report submitted to the Security Council, summed up the situation by saying that:

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

"the Palestinians have expressed a profound feeling of vulnerability at all times ... They have stated that they felt unsafe even inside their homes ...", (S/21919, para. 19)

and they emphasized:

"... their distrust of the Israeli occupation authorities ... charged with maintaining law and order ... and that they felt that only an impartial presence, properly mandated by the United Nations, would be able to provide them with a credible sense of protection." (ibid., para. 20)

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

As we read that report, we get a fairly clear picture of what was happening there in respect of the human rights of the inhabitants. The report puts a special responsibility on the Security Council regarding that situation. In this respect, we support the proposal of the Secretary-General that the Council should invite the States parties to the Geneva Convention to consider measures to ensure respect for the provisions of the Convention which stipulates in its very first article that:

"The High Contracting Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for the present convention in all circumstances." (S/21919, para. 14)

Despite the importance of providing protection to Palestinian people living under occupation, the Palestinian problem is much larger and broader than that. It is not just a question of human rights, just as it is not simply a refugee problem. It is a highly political issue, in the first instance, and the keystone is the legitimate national rights of the Palestinians, primarily their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent State on the national soil of Palestine.

Israel has denied the Palestinian people their national rights, which were recognized by the international community in many resolutions adopted by the General Assembly. Israel's position is a challenge to the will of the international community, and it continues to be so. It is stubbornly going against the trend of history and the realities of life, for the Palestinian people are a people whose existence cannot be denied. They have their own identity and a glorious past. Israel's prevarications will not prevent them from holding on to their own homeland. Their will can never be crushed by Israeli repression, which was designed to empty the Palestinian land of its legitimate inhabitants so as to install, instead, Jewish immigrants.

The great Palestinian intifadah, which has been going on for three years, has manifested implacable opposition to Israeli occupation and the resolve of the

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

Palestinians to regain their freedom and to exercise their national rights. They have expressed their desire for peace, which was endorsed in an official statement. The intifadah is not an expression of despair and frustration, neither is it an act of desperation. Rather, it is the birth of a State and a project of peace. The intifadah has been embodied in the historic declaration, adopted by the Executive Palestinian Committee in November 1988 in Algiers. There were also the statements by the leaders of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. There was the peace initiative submitted by the Palestinian Chairman, Mr. Yasser Arafat, in the General Assembly meeting in Geneva in December 1988. There was the Casablanca Arab Summit in June 1989, which endorsed the Palestinian peace proposal. Most States of the world supported that initiative and recognized the State of Palestine.

Despite this support for the Palestinian peace plan, Israel continued its policy of rejection of that policy and persisted in its intransigence in an attempt to gain time by any possible means. It turned its back on the moderation, which came from the Palestinians and was supported by all the Arab States. It also turned a deaf ear to the many appeals to it to reconsider the methods it was using and to allow the Palestinians to coexist peacefully with it. The Israeli attitude is a continuing rejection, and the world has become accustomed to this. In the past, it has denied even the very existence of the Palestinian people. It has tried to wipe out the Palestinian cause, and it continues to refuse to implement United Nations resolutions relating to any aspect of the problem, beginning with resolution 181 (II) on the establishment of two States in Palestine, a Jewish State and an Arab State. Then there was resolution 194 (III) on the right to return and to compensation of Palestinian refugees. Israel also refused to abide by the resolutions on the status of the Arab city of Al-Quds, including Security Council

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

resolutions 252 (1968), 267 (1969) and 478 (1980). Israel also refused to abide by Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which called on it to withdraw from Palestinian and Arab lands that it had occupied in June 1967. It also failed to abide by Security Council resolution 465 (1980) relating to Jewish settlements in occupied lands. Israel has also refused to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention, endorsed by the Security Council. It claims that the Convention does not apply to the occupied territories. Israel's rejectionism is highlighted by the settlement policy and the expansion policy, which is being methodically pursued. It is also expressed in statements by Israeli leaders. Mr. Itzhak Shamir, the Prime Minister, made a statement last week at a meeting of his party. He said:

> "Our old leaders left us with the clear mission of preserving this Land of Israel from the Mediterranean to the Jordan River for future generations for mass immigration and the Jewish people who will live in the majority in this land."

Statements like that show very clearly that Israel does not want peace. It has aggressive ambitions in the region. Peace is based on essential elements, which have to be recognized. Primarily, Israel has to be persuaded that its occupation has to come to an end, that is, the military occupation, which is a violation essentially of human rights and also an infringement on human dignity. This occupation, from what we can see from history, and according to the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention, can only be temporary in its nature.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

It would be much better for Israel and for the Mediterranean region as a whole if the occupation of the Palestinian and Arab lands by Israel were to end peacefully and thus spare everybody further suffering, enable the region as a whole finally to enjoy peace and ensure a better life for future generations.

Today détente prevails in international relations because of the deep changes that have taken place over the past two years in Europe and the recent ending of the cold war. It goes without saying that this improvement in the international situation has had an impact to varying degrees in different parts of the world. One of the results of this new stage that our world has entered has been the strengthening of international legality and the role of the United Nations, in particular the Security Council. Since international legality as represented by United Nations resolutions and international law is an indivisible whole, and since the United Nations has the machinery to ensure respect for its resolutions, we would expect the international Organization to act firmly and effectively to ensure respect for those resolutions relating to the question of Palestine, which is at the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, so as to guarantee a peaceful, just and lasting comprehensive settlement.

We still believe that the most appropriate means is to convene an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations with the participation of all parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the Palestine Liberation Organization, the sole authentic representative of the Palestinian people, and the five permanent members of the Security Council on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and with full respect for the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, primarily their right to self-determination and to establish their own independent Palestinian State with the old Arab city of Al-Quds as its capital.

(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

In conclusion we would hope that the Security Council will be able to convene this conference as soon as possible so that the long-awaited peace may finally be realized.

Mr. LI Daoyu (China) (interpretation from Chinese): Since the last General Assembly session many major changes have taken place in the international situation. In the Middle East region, thanks to the practical position and initiatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the concerted efforts of the Arab countries and the active endeavours of the international community, a gratifying trend at one time emerged in the peace process in the Middle East. However, as the Israeli authorities still persist in their rigid position and refuse either to recognize the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people or to conduct a dialogue with the PLO, the Middle East peace process has once again become bogged down. Since the new Israeli Government came to power it has settled large numbers of Jewish immigrants in occupied territory, thus creating new obstacles to the settlement of the Middle East question. It has also intensified its suppression of the Palestinian people's uprising in the occupied territory. Even more serious is the fact that, during the current General Assembly session, on 8 October, Israeli security forces created a horrifying incident by massacring Palestinian residents. This has been strongly condemned by the international community. The Gulf crisis, which started a few months ago, has made the turbulent Middle East situation even more tense and introduced new complex elements into the Middle East question. The Chinese Government is greatly concerned over the current situation in the Middle East.

For more than 40 years the Palestinian people have been deprived of their own land and the exercise of their legitimate national rights and have been living in an abyss of misery. Nevertheless, they have never stopped their struggle. The

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

uprising in the occupied territory, which has been going on for three years, is a demonstration of the Palestinian people's determination to recover their lost territory and their legitimate national rights.

The question now requiring a reply from the international community is how long they are going to tolerate the situation in the occupied territory, where the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter are being violated? How long are they going to let the suffering Palestinian people wait? The core of the Middle East question is the Palestinian issue, and it is clear that until this is solved and the sufferings of the Palestinian people are brought to an end there will be no peace and tranquillity in the Middle East, including Israel.

In view of the seriousness of the situation in the occupied territory, the Chinese delegation believes that it is necessary to act with great urgency and adopt prompt and effective measures to protect the safety of the Palestinian residents in the occupied territory Meanwhile, efforts should be made to promote a fair and reasonable settlement of the Middle East question. The key to the protection of the Palestinian people is compliance by the Israeli authorities with the Fourth Geneva Convention, and they must be urged to act accordingly. This Convention is entirely applicable to the Palestinian and other Arab territories occuped by Israel since 1967. As one of its signatories, Israel has an obligation to implement strictly the relevant provisions of the Convention. We support the convocation of a meeting of the signatories to the Convention on this matter, the dispatch of United Nations monitoring personnel to the occupied territory and the adoption of other effective measures.

The Chinese Government holds that the fundamental solution to the Palestinian question would provide for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian and other Arab

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

territories under its occupation since 1967, the restoration of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, mutual recognition by the State of Palestine and the State of Israel, and the peaceful coexistence of all the Middle East countries, including Israel and Palestine.

(Mr. Li Daoyu, China)

In order to reach this goal, we support the early convening of an international conference on the Middle East question, under the auspices of the United Nations and with the participation of the five permanent members of the Security Council and all the parties concerned. We also support all forms of dialogue conducted by the parties concerned and any proposition or suggestion conducive to a fair and reasonable settlement of the Middle East question. As long as all the parties concerned show sincerity in seeking a solution and make earnest endeavours, it is possible to settle the Middle East question through political means. China will, as always, continue firmly to support the just struggle waged by the Palestinian people, and the efforts made by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Arab countries, the United Nations and other parties to achieve a political settlement of the Palestinian question.

We hope that the Israeli authorities will go along with the historical development, attune themselves to the voice of justice and reason, discard their old practices and make a fresh start, and withdraw from the occupied territories at an early date. This will not only benefit peace and stability in the Middle East region, but also conform with the fundamental interests of the Israeli people. We hope that the international community will accord greater attention to the Palestinian question so as to achieve an early, fair and reasonable settlement of this regional conflict, which has remained unsolved for over 40 years. In so doing, it will contribute to the restoration and maintenance of peace and security in the Middle East and the entire world.

The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.